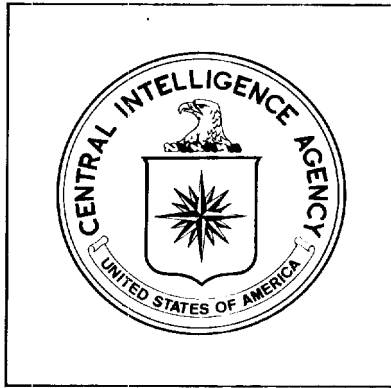


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This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Regime Continues To Chip
Away at Artists' Unity

Only one incident--the arrest of a prominent Moscow-based artist--marred the recent exhibit of unconventional art held with official approval at a palace of culture in Leningrad. More than 8,000 visitors viewed some 200 canvasses by the time the four-day exhibit closed on December 26. This was the first indoor show of its kind anywhere in the USSR since the 1920s. It was especially notable because it was held in Leningrad, a city with a reputation for taking a tough line on cultural unorthodoxy. Last month the Leningraders' Moscow colleagues gave up plans to hold a similar show because of police harassment.

Artists Aleksandr Glezer and Oskar Rabin, both prominent in Moscow's unconventional art circles, visited the Leningrad show. Glezer was approached by police on the opening day while tape-recording interviews with visitors waiting in line to enter the exhibit and was arrested when he refused to show his identity documents. He was reportedly released on December 31 after spending 10 days in jail for petty hooliganism.

Like Rabin, Glezer is a Jew and was one of the organizers of Moscow's unconventional art shows last fall. Lately, he has made no secret of his intention to irritate the authorities to the point that they will get rid of him by granting his long-pending application to emigrate to the West. In the words of one of Glezer's colleagues, he has generally been "making a pest of himself."

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That characterization, however, was probably made not entirely with sympathy for Glezer's motives. According to the US embassy, Moscow's unconventional artists are becoming disenchanted with him, feeling that he is trying to use them for his own purposes. Glezer apparently has been buying up large numbers of unconventional works at low prices, an activity that in the Western press has earned him the title of "art collector." He has told his colleagues that he has a "channel" for getting Soviet unofficial art out of the country, and that after he emigrates he will open a "Soviet modern art museum" in London.

Several artists from Glezer's circle now reportedly suspect that he is more interested in profit than in their cause. In view of Glezer's repeated but so far relatively harmless run-ins with the police and KGB, his lucrative art collecting, and his confidence that he will be allowed to emigrate, it may be only a matter of time before his friends begin to suspect that the regime is permitting him to continue his activities in hopes of discrediting the group as a whole. That suspicion may grow if Glezer's "channel" abroad remains open.

Whatever Glezer's motives may be, the relatively sophisticated tactics of the regime may be succeeding in splitting the artists' ranks. The exhibitors in Leningrad were willing to accept a degree of official control over their art--including prior review of the works to be shown. Culture minister Demichev's recent private hint that the definition of socialist realism might be stretched a little, also suggests that the regime might agree to a trade-off--the artists accepting control over their activity in return for wider limits of acceptable artistic expression. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Warsaw Pact--Defense Ministers Meeting

The annual meeting of Warsaw Pact defense ministers, which opens next Tuesday in Moscow, is shaping up as a routine affair, according to a source of the US defense attache in Moscow. The ministers will reportedly discuss the Pact's training cycle for 1975 and may also review the state of negotiations in the European security and force reduction talks.

It is possible that the Soviets will again raise the question of multinational exercises and tighter command lines for Pact forces. Soviet Chief of Staff Kulikov had referred to the need for strong command channels in an article in *Pravda* in November. The Soviets are not likely to press these topics, however, given the opposition of some Pact members--notably the Romanians. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Soviets Again Seeking Greater
Access at Singapore Port

The US embassy in Singapore reports that the Soviets want to have a naval auxiliary overhauled in February at the government-owned Sembawang shipyard on the north end of Singapore Island. US and UK combatants are serviced at Sembawang, and, in the interest of providing a secure environment, the Singapore government has turned aside repeated Soviet attempts to gain access to this part of the harbor. Because of the recent decline in Western naval repair work at Sembawang, however, the embassy foresees that the Singapore government will be under strong pressure to change its policy.

The embassy became aware of the Soviet request when a Singapore defense official asked the US naval attache on December 30 about how the US government was likely to react. The official said that the British had been asked and were not expected to object.

The embassy notes that the UK's announced withdrawal of forces reduces the leverage the British have had to exclude the Soviets. Moreover, the rapid expansion of repair facilities among the many large shipyards in Singapore has sharpened competition for ship repair business. The embassy speculates that the only thing that will keep Soviet vessels out of Sembawang is a commitment for increased US and UK repair work. This, the embassy notes, does not seem to be in the cards.

For the USSR, the repair and replenishment of navy ships in Singapore extends the time they can stay away from the Black Sea and Vladivostok. Since 1972, Keppel Shipyard on the south side of the island has handled the repair work on a growing number of

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Soviet naval auxiliaries as well as Soviet commercial vessels. In the past year the work on some Soviet ships has fallen behind schedule because of the heavy work-load at Keppel, and the Soviets probably have cited this delay to support their request for use of Sembawang. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Tito Inspects New Medical Facilities

President Tito arrived in Oplenac, Serbia, on Wednesday, probably for an inspection tour of new medical and vacation facilities that have reportedly been constructed for him.

25X1C [REDACTED] in September that a new facility was under construction at Oplenac, which is located about 50 miles southeast of Belgrade. Tito's military doctors have contended that his normal haunt, the island of Brioni, is too far from adequate medical facilities.

The decision to lure Tito away from Brioni, however, may be motivated as much by security concerns as by the proximity of medical aid. Brioni is off the coast of Croatia, and Tito's frequent travels through the republic invite an attempt on his life by anti-Tito Croat emigres who have been able to get back into the country with relative ease. Military counter-intelligence, which now has full responsibility for the President's personal security, may well have influenced his doctors' recommendation.

Oplenac is in a region where few tourists are seen. Moreover, the area is attractive in its own right, and the royal apartments in the ancestral home of the Obrenovic dynasty that ruled Yugoslavia up until World War II should satisfy Tito's tastes for luxury. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Czechoslovakia: Commentary on
Claims Agreement

Prague has broken its long silence on congressional action invalidating the agreement initialed in July 1974 which was to settle American claims for property in Czechoslovakia nationalized after the war.

On January 2, an article in the party daily *Rude Pravo* reflected the regime's disappointment and frustration.

Prague is especially disturbed because the action freezes plans for the return of 18.4 tons of Czechoslovak gold that the Nazis looted in World War II unless the claims agreement is renegotiated to provide more favorable terms to US claimants. *Rude Pravo* pointed out that this is the second time that a Czechoslovak-US claims agreement has fallen through and declared that restoration of the gold is an issue of "national honor."

Although the *Rude Pravo* commentary attempted to put the ball in Washington's court, it acknowledged that "realistic officials" in Washington, still want to normalize relations with Czechoslovakia. The article, moreover, ended on an optimistic note that Prague will continue to strive to eliminate obstacles to bilateral relations. (CONFIDENTIAL NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY)

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